

Arn Chorn-Pond



Musician, Human rights, Activist, and Founder of Cambodian Living Arts

Arn, a genocide survivor, escaped from a child labor camp and made it to the U.S. as a refugee. He returned to Cambodia where he founded Cambodian Living Arts (CLA) in 1998. CLA works to preserve and revitalize Cambodian performing arts for the first decade. Today, CLA has become a catalyst in the vibrant arts sector, inspiring the next generation.

Arn was one of the first recipients of the Reebok Human Rights Award in 1988, and he received the 1991 Amnesty International Human Rights Award, the 1993 Kohl Foundation International Peace Prize, and the 1996 Spirit of Anne Frank Outstanding Citizen Award.

Contact us

To invite Arn to speak at your school, community, or event, please contact us for details.

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A Journey of Healing Through Music

In 1984, Arn became the first Cambodian child soldier to speak publicly about the atrocities that occurred during the Cambodian genocide, delivering a speech to 10,000 people at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Arn has since led talks and workshops at conferences, universities and high schools around the world, seeking to inspire others by sharing his personal story of resilience and healing through music.

Theme “Holding Humanity in Times of Uncertainty”

In September and October 2026, Arn will travel to the United States for his annual speaking tour, **“Holding Humanity in Times of Uncertainty.”** Through music, storytelling, and his personal journey—from surviving the Khmer Rouge to finding resilience through art—he explores how the arts foster healing, empathy, and connection.

As conflict, displacement, and social divides shape daily life, people seek ways to respond with compassion. Arn's stories and music create spaces to listen, reflect, and reconnect, opening pathways for understanding and shared humanity.

Arn would like to engage with schools, churches, and communities—inviting students, educators, and community members to listen, reflect, and create together, strengthening empathy and connection.

Who Can Join

This session is open to everyone—middle and high school students, college and university students, educators, artists, community members, and anyone interested in learning and connecting. It will feature a friendly, engaging talk and flute performance lasting 40–60 minutes, with time for Q&A.

What You Can Host

Main Talk & Musical Reflection

Arn shares his story of survival and healing, showing how music restored his sense of humanity after genocide. Through storytelling and live music, he highlights how the arts can help people process trauma, find their voice, and reconnect with others.

Panel Discussion

Arn joins local artists, educators, youth, and community leaders in a conversation on how creativity and cultural understanding help communities navigate conflict and uncertainty. The discussion highlights the arts as tools for dialogue, healing, and connection.

Collaborative Music Performance

A collaborative music performance with local students or community groups, featuring music and storytelling that reflect local voices. Arn joins for a closing piece, symbolizing shared humanity, resilience, and hope.

Investing In Cambodia's Creative Future

\$5,000 plus additional expenses for Arn's accommodation, local transportation, and meals. Arn is very flexible and can stay at either parents' homes or the organizer's home. Your speaking fee will directly support Cambodian Living Arts. Each engagement funds a full year's scholarship for a talented young artist in Cambodia, nurturing the next generation of creative voices. By hosting Arn, you become part of an inspiring journey to transform lives, preserve and develop Cambodia's rich artistic heritage.



Arn Chorn-Pond



"I want to thank Arn and tell him I appreciate him for coming so many miles to tell us his story and how brave he is for having the courage to tell us about everything that has happened to him and for being able to be brave and keep moving and making the world a better place and for inspiring us and helping us to become better people and to make the world a better place, one person at a time!"

Lydia

Northern Ozaukee School District, Fredonia, WI